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42.—Ambleside and Hartley Coleridge.
43.—To Erin's Isle: by Edwin Waugh.
44.—Disley and Lyme Hall.
45 & 46.—Paris as Seen by a Manchester Man.
48.—Three Days in Wild Wales.
49.—Belfast to Portrush: by Edwin Waugh.
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41.—Owens College Athletic Sports.
43.—Lancashire *v.* Surrey, at Old Trafford.
44.—The Bicycle Contests at the Amphitheatre.
46.—An Assault-of-Arms at the Free Trade Hall.
47.—The Match between Lancashire and Sussex.
48.—The Athletic Festival.
49.—Amateur *v.* Professional Cricket.
49.—Athletic Fete at Longsight.
50.—Mode of Awarding Athletic Prizes.
51.—Lancashire Cricketers in the South.
52.—Pedestrianism *v.* Gymnastics.
53.—Lancashire *v.* Warwickshire.
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A WINTER'S TALE.

THE performance of this revival is now reduced within three hours and three-quarters, and the acting has improved considerably. With these two exceptions, there has not been a single concession to the unanimous opinion of all who have seen the play. The characters still constantly go, on and off, to music.* Autolycus advances to the footlights, and sings his snatches to music. Hermione's attendants close round her, when Leontes orders her to prison, to music; which deprives the situation of every atom of effect. This is burlesquing Shakespere. The satyr dance still wearies and annoys the audience, and prolongs the fourth act, which is as tedious and protracted as ever: although every one is thinking, with the Shepherd, "Here has been too much homely foolery already."

While the beautiful scenery will commend itself to every spectator, the care with which the play has been produced stands in greater need of recognition at our hands. It is so seldom that attention is paid to such "unconsidered trifles" as intervals of sixteen years, that it is gratifying to note the grisly hue assumed by the beards of various characters in the later scenes. The contrast in the appearance of Mr. Calvert in the first act and the fifth, and Mr. Gibson in the first and fourth, is especially noticeable. We also beg to thank Mr. Calvert for the care with which the attendant young ladies have been selected. Though beauty is not quite so common in the world as ugliness, there is plenty of comeliness to be found by looking for it, and the personal appearance of the individual members of choruses has a great deal to do with the general effect. Those engaged in *A Winter's Tale* have been judiciously selected, and with their hair all cropped in front† look very nice.

While we acknowledge with alacrity the sumptuous manner in which this piece has been mounted, and appreciate it, we must confess to an agreement with the matter, if not the manner, of that letter to the *Guardian* which excited Mr. Calvert's ire. No doubt it is hard, after making enormous exertions, to be told they have been misdirected; but there can be no manner of doubt that scenery and setting are insignificant compared with acting. And the acting at the Prince's, after all is said, is hardly bearable when Mr. Calvert is not on the stage. Miss Baldwin and Miss Claude mean very well, and are not destitute of intelligence, but they are sadly unsuited to the parts of Florizel and Perdita. Mr. Shaw possesses comic power, and may in other pieces be amusing, but he is only occasionally so in this. His first scene is both the actor's and the author's best. After that it degenerates. Mr. Shaw makes too much of a merry-andrew and too little of a shrewd rogue of Autolycus. Mr. Leitch, also, in our opinion, misconceives the part of the Shepherd's son. He surely should be a dull and heavy clown. But such as his conception is, we are inclined to think he does not interpret it badly.

Of all the actors who have improved since the first night, Mr. Calvert has improved the most. It may be that the cares of management now press less heavily upon him. The difference is wonderful. We confess to having been disappointed with his acting of Leontes on the first night, which, though the best acting there, was hard, monotonous, and cold. Now there is life, there is feeling, there is passion, there is elocution, there is declamation—in a word, there is acting. Yet there is all the stateliness there was before. There is improvement in a hundred little points which are too minute for explicit mention here, but which make all the difference in the effectiveness of the performance. Mr. Calvert's playing in the third act is now a very fine conception, finely executed. The effect produced by the entire act is thrice as great as it originally was. It is now as well as it was ill managed. The thunder and lightning is natural and solemn, and the whole scene leads up to the king's remorse at the end in a manner which supports Mr. Calvert's portrayal of it. This act is short and dramatic: wherein it is a striking contrast to the next. Mr. Calvert's now impassioned playing also gives a zest to the first two acts which they sadly needed. We still think he rather hurries over several of the level bits, and does not put into them all the meaning of which they are capable; but his acting is a vast improvement upon what it was, and may yet improve. Of Mrs. Calvert we can hardly speak so favourably. Though she thoroughly conceives the character of Hermione, neither her presence nor her voice are quite such as to enable her fully to execute her own conception. In some of her bits of business—such as the exit in the second act—there is much improvement. Miss Julia Seaman, notwithstanding her stentorian voice, is a very good representative of the character she takes. It is objected to the performance of this actress that she makes too vulgar a Paulina, but it should not be forgotten that Paulina is a good deal of a vixen. Her playing is genuine acting, though it be rather overdone. On the first night, not until her entrance did the play begin to live. At the same time, she might with advantage speak in tones less strident. Her excessive energy in her denunciation of Leontes was, last Monday night, the only blemish in the third act. Mr. Archer as Polixenes, Mr. Gibson as Camillo, and Mr. Raymond as Antigonus, present good mediocre portraitures. Mr. Wainwright, as the Old Shepherd, was perhaps rather better, or would have been but for a sort of twang he has. Miss Groves is pat in her part, but ought Mamillius to be so very young? At least, one's idea of him is of a sturdier child than Miss Groves makes. The bear is wretched, and insufferably silly. It turns a scene into a farce.

Take it for all in all, the play is now fairly effective, except in the fourth act, which is a whole hour long, and drags terribly. If it were not for the statue—which is a great effect—we should recommend spectators to leave at the end of the third act. Most of the humour by which it is sought to alleviate the monotonous melancholy of the previous acts is more melancholy still. The most ardent admirer of every syllable of Shakespere cannot maintain that there is anything dramatic in the pedlar business, or that a dance of satyrs is high art. The pastoral drama is a very dull affair. There is some beautiful poetry in this act, and some humour; but as an act of a drama it is ineffective, dull, and tedious in the extreme. It really ought to be cut. The whole act is a huge parenthesis in the main story; and if a long parenthesis is a vice in ordinary composition, what is it in dramatic?

We scarcely know whether we did right or not, last week, in calling *Winter's Tale* a comedy. It is a comedy in little else than in not being a tragedy. It is a hybrid composition, being in effect a tragedy in which all ends happily—that is, comparatively. Yet we suppose it is in reality a comedy, although it is nothing like what one ordinarily associates with the name. Indeed, it is too uniformly serious. The comic element is introduced too late; and even the serious portion lacks that incident and action which is essential in a play. It is, indeed, a *Tale* rather than a drama. Some say it is a perfect tale. Without going so far as to admit that a tale in which a loving wife suffers herself to be kept apart from her mourning husband for the preposterous space of sixteen years is sufficiently natural to be even poetically perfect, we admit it is a tale. There is much talking and little doing. The inordinately long-winded commonplace confabulations which the characters have together increases the excessive gravity of the piece. All the interest that it arouses is of a sombre caste, which ineffective interviews are apt to intensify into heaviness. We cannot, therefore think the management has made a very happy choice in presenting the public with the counterpart revival to that of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. But when we think of the expense and labour which have been lavished upon the production, and the character of the entertainment which it has supplanted, we are unable to help feeling thankful, and almost wishing that the performance may meet with more success than we can conscientiously opine that it deserves.

As we took occasion, on the re-opening of this theatre, in our remarks upon the decorations, to advert to the somewhat bald appearance of the pillars on each side of the proscenium, it is proper that we should

*A way the ancients had. See *Burney's History of Music.*

†A fashion in vogue at the period of the Delphic oracle. See *Becker's Charikles*, *Zahn's Pompeian Ornaments*, &c.

acknowledge that this look has been almost entirely taken away from them by the addition of some simple ornamentation, and, if we are not mistaken, a slight alteration in the tints of several of the colours. The decorations now look splendid, and the theatre is a picture.

THE CITY COUNCIL AND THE IRWELL.

IN the columns of our daily contemporaries there has recently been some rather sharp correspondence about the condition of the river Irwell. The Old Trafford people, especially, have complained of the fearfully bad smells arising from the river, and have enquired if there really be no remedy. In these days of scientific resource and voluble preaching about sanitary measures, it certainly does seem singular that, in the neighbourhood of so enterprising and practical a city as Manchester, a nuisance like this should exist without any one apparently being held responsible. And the singularity is the greater when we remember that the death-rate in Manchester is unusually large, and that this hideous peculiarity is shared with the sister borough of Salford. The town councils of these twin burghs appear to argue that it is only weak intellects which can see in the common death-rate the result of the common pollution of the river Irwell. The filthy stream exhales its horrid gases in both boroughs alike, but it is only fortuitous that both boroughs are very unhealthy! Cause and effect in this particular instance are dissevered by the common council, who, having appointed an officer of health—save the mark!—repose serenely upon their municipal impeccability.

We had a notion that some river commissioners had been in Manchester recently, and that the purport of their commission was to report upon the pollution of streams, with a view to the abatement of that nuisance. In all probability these commissioners were "got at," cupped with little lancets of municipal quirks, by our accomplished Town-clerk; otherwise it is difficult to believe that the commissioners should not have laid aside all professional reserve, and have hailed down anathemas upon the abominable stream which they were surveying. Does any one out of Bedlam (as Mr. Bright would say) believe that this river nuisance can go on for six years longer? What is the use of incessantly vaunting the advantages of municipal self-government whilst an evil like this cries aloud in our midst? The corporation, in this instance, is itself a nuisance, and stops the way: because, if there were no corporation, the possibility is that a great effort would be made, by voluntary organization, to get the disgrace removed. Individually, there are men now in the council who would be amongst the first to try to do so, but who at present, as councillors of the city, sleep the sweet slumber of official life or death. Perhaps the unsavouriness of the subject deters the delicate councillors from meddling with it. We must all sympathize with men who have never had dirty work to do, but who are now, in the zenith of their fame as councillors, called upon to confront the foulest stream in Christendom or privydom. No wonder that they should run to the fascinating officer who is the vinaigrette of the council, and take a long smell at him; that they should smell and be clean. Or else, in stress of Heron, that they should call for Leigh, saying unto him:—"Leigh, survey it—Leigh, analyze it—Leigh, report upon it; but do not, for heaven's sake, suggest any plan for its amendment, for that would give us unheard-of trouble; and, besides, the Town-clerk disapproves of it!"

If one may judge of the world by the character and force of the deputations which have recently invaded our magisterial courts on the subject of licensing, and which drew from Mr. Richard Cobbett, we think, the remark that the justices were being subjected to a pressure unknown so far in magisterial annals, we should say that all the world were drunkards. Yet we know that this is not so, and we also know that the teetotal deputations don't mean to say so. It is their earnestness for the repression of a vice which makes the vice look bigger than it really is. We only wish we could get deputations equally active and influential to assail the bench of justices on the subject of our sanitary arrangements. It is one of the misfortunes of this question that the laws relating to sanitary matters are very complex, very diverse, and, in many instances, only permissive. In a recent article on "Sanitary Legislation," the *Pall Mall Gazette* says:

"Local obstructiveness is of no party. It offers an impartial opposition to Conservatives and Liberals, provided they presume to interfere with the vested rights of each parish to poison itself and its neighbours. Nor is it only sluggish ignorance that has to be faced. * * * There is hardly a nuisance that does not bring profit to someone, hardly an obstacle to sanitary reform which can be removed without loss or inconvenience to someone. Very often the persons who would thus be affected have considerable local influence, and in this way they can command the support of the people, who would be the greatest gainers by the improvement. The certainty of offending a rich manufacturer or a large landholder appeals to men's minds with a nearness and practical force which the possibility of securing purer air or more wholesome lodging is far from possessing. *The most frequent of all the victims of sanitary wrongs are the very poor, who have neither the time, nor the knowledge, nor the power of combination, which would enable them to strengthen the hands of the Government in its efforts to help them.*"

The italics in the last paragraph of this extract are ours. We heartily concur in the entire quotation. Undoubtedly this is a poor man's question. Had it been that of the "well-to-do," the Irwell nuisance would have abated ere this. Our town council is full of philanthropists. The poor they have always before them—now for educating, now for drinking, now for lodging—but, in the matter of wholesale poisoning, a plethoric lethargy distinguishes all their behaviour. So far, indeed, they do not condescend to notice the matter at all. They have recently manifested a commendable desire to conciliate the ancient Jews, by trying to make the people conform their observance of the Sabbath to old Hebrew practices, and have been engaged in teaching their fellow-creatures what to eat, drink, and avoid. Upon topics of this kind they prate, and orate, and lay their ears down to their work like rabbits of the "lop" species. It is astonishing with what dignity they can move an address; how they warm to their work and rise to the height of the argument, as if they were blown out with oratorical yeast; but they cannot, with all their intellects, their souls, their strength, their practical sagacity (a good round phrase for a town council)—their practical sagacity (we must have it twice)—remove a nuisance.

The corporation of Manchester without an authoritative stink at its elbow would be lost; the stink is the precious jewel in its head. The visible Mayor, magnificent as he is and noble; the visible Town-clerk, graceful as he is and elegant, are not the controlling powers of this great city. The head-centre of this vast municipality is invisible, indivisible, impalpable—a spirit of disease, of destruction, of death, occasionally offering up in token of its presence a sacrifice of foul-smelling savour, but more frequently rising from the dead sea waters of its Irwell home, and smiting us in silence to our graves.

THE BYRON CONTROVERSY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SPHINX.

DEAR SIR,—My regret to see you take the popular and wrong side in this wholesome controversy is my excuse for this letter.

Not only do I demur to the side you take, but to your way of taking it. I ask, what on earth has the fact of Mrs. Stowe's being "an American dame" to do with the discussion? I am not, however, sorry that a phrase which is meaningless, except so far as it tends to excite a miserable prejudice, has been used by the writer; since it shows that he has felt it necessary to bolster up his position by an irrelevant but very effective piece of vulgarity.

In bringing so heavy a charge against a notorious dead man, Mrs. Stowe has done either a great right or a great wrong. Are not, then, such epithets as "whitewasher," "New England uncletommery," "fussy old lady," "dear good woman," "busybodying," "the conjugal infidelity line," &c., a little paltry? Why carp at Mrs. Stowe, and do nothing else? What is Mrs. Stowe by the side of the revelation she has made? What do Mrs. Stowe's motives matter? Yet, as you have devoted your whole attention to them, it is not inappropriate in me to say that, though there are not many who will disagree with you, there are some. Nothing has transpired to detract in the least from the great honour which is due to the heroism of Mrs. Stowe: for it is heroism to jump into the howling jaws of two worlds, to effect what one believes to be a righteous retribution, and to right what she believes to be a shameful wrong.

Only in one sentence do you mention the important point—"why open the charnel-house, and uncover the coffin?" Instead of quoting the proper answer to this question and endeavouring to demolish that,

you quote Mrs. Stowe's answers to it, and endeavour to demolish them—as though tilting at *her* windmills affected the matter! The real answer is one which you did well to avoid, and which I defy any man to demolish—namely, that public knowledge of the truth of anything is better, ultimately, than public ignorance: and Mrs. Stowe firmly believes her charge to be the truth. To deny this overwhelming answer to your question is to deny the virtue of truth—which is God. It is superfluous to look at the *consequences* of telling the truth. It is the truth. There is your answer. Though to finite intelligence its consequences may seem mischievous, it is certain that they are ordained by infinite intelligence to be wholesome. To consider them is narrow-minded. Truth is virtue; and when man sets himself up to look at the consequences of virtue, to judge that it is evil, he simply sets himself up against God. The huge majority of men are incapable of seeing the insignificance of the small immediate compared with the vast ultimate. To see the ultimate itself is given to none; but to see the insignificance of the immediate *is* given to a few. And to those few the gallant deed of Mrs. Stowe is a great admiration, and as great a joy. She has added one more to the important services which she has done mankind. "The sale of *Manfred, Don Juan, Cain*, and the rest, will revive," you say. What does it matter if they do? What is the bad influence of some evil poetry, mixed with much noble, compared with the good influence of the heroic example of a loathsome truth's being boldly spoken in the face of two wild worlds? "She has unsettled a nation!" you cry out in horror. Great heaven! what is a nation to the truth? Let it unsettle fifty. These are consequences which man has no right to look at. The latter is not even a bad consequence. If a nation is settled in a false opinion, unsettling it is the greatest service you can do it.

I don't see what the parsons having "had a hand in all this" has to do with the matter; nor do I think that parsons can be connected with such a display of sense and courage. Parsons and women, with that narrow-mindedness which is common to both, are nearly always for smothering these things up. The world, which sympathizes with sinners, from a fellow-feeling, takes the same side. Under these circumstances, the persons who are intrepid enough to expose certain classes of sins always come in for the curses of mankind. If the sin has been committed by a man, his cause is instantly espoused by all the women in the world, who set upon his poor assailant with proportionate spleen. In this case, many men are rallying to his rescue and traducing his censor. Tongues are never wanting to abuse a satirist, and I do not think it is a manly part to add to their Babel. It is unfair to heap the odium of a charge upon her who prefers it, instead of upon him who incurred it. Instead of cavilling at Mrs. Stowe, cavil at her story. Believing it to be the truth, and believing herself authorized to reveal it, she has acted gallantly in proclaiming it. True, it will not make discerning persons think any worse of Byron than they did before, because for them to do so were almost impossible; but discerning persons are a minute minority in the world, and the eyes of others it may ultimately open. Whether Mrs. Stowe's account is true or not is, of course, the grand question; but your article in one part presumes its truth, and yet attacks her.

I am sorry to see you take the women's side in this matter. I do not think there was occasion to add another voice to the indignant thunders that are now denouncing bravery. Mrs. Stowe has incurred universal odium. She has done an act of justice, and the sky is rushing down. But she is not to be pitied. She is rather to be envied. Than the scorn of the universe I can conceive no higher honour.—Yours sincerely,

S. G.

[Our correspondent's indignation seems to us to have overpowered his logical faculty. His are but "wild and whirling words." So far as we are concerned, they have no application whatsoever. If we had assumed Mrs. Stowe's story to be true—if we had shown the slightest inkling of a belief in its truth—"S. G." would have had a reasonable basis for his indignant objection to the tone and tenor of our article. Our position, however, is the very reverse of all this. We do not presume, as "S. G." asserts, the truth of Mrs. Stowe's account. We entirely discredit it. We say "she does not offer one word or scintilla of proof." We "distrust her recollections," especially after the lapse of thirteen years; moreover, we speak of Lady Byron's statements as mere *suspicions*, unsupported by any other testimony. And taking this view, we protested, as we believed we had just grounds for protesting, against the publication of a charge so horrible upon pretences so vague, so flimsy, and so untenable. We agree with our correspondent that the truth of the story is the grand question. Until that is proved—which it certainly has not been by the authoress of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*—we prefer to retain our own opinion as to Mrs. Stowe's "heroism," "gallant deed," and "important service to mankind."—EDITOR *Sphinx*.]

TWO HOURS WITH THE SPIRITUALISTS.

A NEWSPAPER advertisement headed Spiritualism lately informed us that "the monthly convention" would be held that evening, at which the subject for discussion would be "Certain strange occurrences: their cause and influence." We were furthermore told that the admission was free. Two objections made us hesitate; one, that although admission might be free, as indeed it usually is to a missionary meeting even, there might be some form of assailing one's pockets after a sufficient audience had been caught. This, however, we easily disposed of by leaving our purse at home. The other objection was suggested by the advertisement. A "convention" seemed to point to a meeting of equals—of persons holding views, possibly diverse, but some views, on the subject. Now we not only had never seen a "spirit," but had never, to our knowledge, seen a spiritualist; and if we were called upon to state our opinions or experiences anent spiritualism, we should be at a non-plus. However, the attractive words, "admission free" would leave us free to admit that we knew nothing about the matter, and we thought that if we came as learners or postulants, or possible proselytes, we should be welcome.

A placard on the walls told us what the advertisement did not tell us, that the convention was to be held at the Temperance Hall, Grosvenor Street, that receptacle of so many strange creeds. One would have thought that there was nothing in common between temperance and spiritualism, but here at least they have the same "platform." This, the visible and material one, we found occupied by two or three gentlemen, of whom one, connected, we believe, with the sewing machine interest, officiated as chairman. He did not enlarge on the respective merits either of Wilcox and Wheeler's, or Gibb's and Baker's, or Grover and Singer's instruments, or of any one of them to the exclusion of the others, for your sewing machinist, whether maker or user, is always a man (or a woman, *pace* Miss Becker) minus machinæ. The chairman's speech, which contained some admirable specimens of the lock-stitch style of oratory, ended by introducing the lecturer of the evening—Mr. Phil. H. Furney—a good-looking young gentleman with moustache and spectacles, and little or no Yankee accent, notwithstanding the suspicious style of his name. This gentleman told us that on the 23rd of August last, he made one of a "spirit-circle" of ten persons round a table, which soon began to creak and move, and must have "cracked and growled, and roared and howled," for "several communications of great interest" were received from "the spirit world!" Later on in the same day, six of the same party again assembled, and after lowering the gas and opening the windows, several spirits floated in and gave more "interesting communications!" The lecturer proceeded to say that spiritualism had been investigated by some of the most scientific men in Europe, and they could not gainsay it, but he did not mention any names, particularly not Faraday. Then he went through a list of the various modes of accounting for the phenomena other than the spiritualistic theory, but all, he thought, were unsatisfactory. Next, our instructor shewed his independence of his audience by saying that he preferred to be guided by these manifestations and by the laws of nature, all which he looked upon as divine; for the Bible, he said, could teach neither him nor anybody else anything about spiritualism, in which we agreed with him. There was a little more free talk about the Scriptures which we don't care to repeat, but we felt we had paid nothing, and were, comparatively speaking, at his mercy. So we let him enjoy his cheap triumph, and felt as delightfully naughty as we have seen young ladies appear to be when, purposely omitting the usual prefix, they have spoken of "John," "Paul," and "Peter." In the peroration, our old friend Franklin, that charlatan of science and politics, of course, appeared, and the steam engine and the

electric telegraph took their usual canter. The whole was wound up with the old argument that if these wonders were possible, why not spiritualism? To which we replied in our own mind with old John Willett, "Ah, to be sure! Why not!"

After the lecture, several questions were put from the audience, and difficulties suggested, which might have been rather formidable if the lecturer had not been a better debater than he was a reasoner. He declined to discuss any matters out of the limits of the essay he had read, and thus easily disposed of many difficulties. The objections taken were, first, that spiritualism, if not proved to be true by science, must be false. To which the lecturer answered he was not there to defend spiritualism as a whole, but that the phenomena were offered to scientific investigators, and if they could make nothing of them, so much the worse for the investigators. Next came the *cui bono* argument—what was the good of it? This, of course, could only be answered by begging the whole question. The next objection was that the alleged communications could not be true, since they were conveyed in such a ridiculous manner by noises and movements of pieces of furniture, whereas the messages recorded in the Bible were direct to a person from a visible or invisible person, by a voice. To this it was replied that the persons receiving these communications did not choose the mode of their delivery, but took them as they came. Some one asked the lecturer what the communications he received at the séance of the 23rd of August were, and would he give the company a specimen. He declared, however, that he couldn't remember one. Upon this, things began to look black for the lecturer; but the chairman came forward and said he was one of the party, and could vouch for the lecturer's account being true. So the chairman was asked in his turn to give a specimen, but he could not do this publicly, but would, in confidence, to any gentleman.

A "workin' man," as he called himself, now presented himself, and in choice vernacular told us what had happened to himself and "mates," who had lately begun the table business. The raps came, questions were put and replies rapped out in due form and taken down, and at length, emboldened by success, they asked a series of questions about a man they pretended was dead, but who was in fact alive in the room. Answers were given about him in the most approved style, and, an hour or two later on, the same questions were asked again, and an entirely different and contradictory set of replies were furnished; and subsequent trials proved that no reliance whatever could be placed on the "sperits," for they lied like anything, "Oh, how they did lie!" Some amusement was created by a tipsy fellow who produced part of a skull, and said that if any of "these here spirituals" could tell him who the article had belonged to when alive, he would give five shillings to the Infirmary. Here an angry looking man with the dirtiest looking pair of check trousers we have ever seen stepped forward, and avowed himself both a materialist and a spiritualist, adding that we "might think that strange." He professed himself able to tell our tipsy friend all he wanted to know, but the latter had in the meantime stumbled out of the room, with the conviction, no doubt, that he had squashed the spirituals for one while, so that the treasurer will have to carry the five shillings to the suspense account, if he takes any notice of it at all.

The audience were truly a miscellaneous lot; besides the persons we have referred to and a few adepts or illuminati, the greater portion seemed to consist of people who were willing to spend an hour or two in a light warm room, although among people they did'nt know, and during the discussion of things utterly beyond their ken. One grave well-bearded gentleman we were sorry for. He declared, with great earnestness, and with tears in his voice if not in his eyes, that he had waited for many years for some manifestation from the other world, but without success. He did not know why it was withheld. He went regularly to chapel, had been a teetotaller and non-smoker for years, he had never been to a theatre or on a racecourse in his life, and he spent all his evenings with his family at home, and yet no message had ever come to him. Well, we think it was the Publican who went down to his house justified rather than the other. We trust our waiting and expectant friend will be gratified some time, but it will probably be in a way he little dreams of at present.

Preparations being made for singing a hymn, we perceived we had heard as much as we were likely to hear of spiritualism, so we escaped again into the everyday life of the material world.

TOWN TALK,

AND THINGS IN GENERAL.

MR. CALVERT.

MR. Calvert has written a very temperate and sensible letter to the *Guardian* in defence of the actors in *A Winter's Tale*. We are bound to believe him, when he says that he has made the best selection available; and when he adds that no expense would have been stinted if better talents could have been got by its outlay, nobody will dream of doubting him. Of niggardliness no just person can accuse the Prince's Theatre. But when Mr. Calvert goes on to imply that in his opinion others of the players act as well as himself, one is driven to the conclusion that his modesty overcomes his judgment. It would be interesting to know to which of the performers he alludes.

MDLLE. CHRISTINE NILSSON.

Whatever Mr. Hallé may have in store for us, the first visit of Mdlle. Christine Nilsson to Manchester is likely to be *the* event of this year's musical season. She is announced to sing at two concerts in the Free Trade Hall during the ensuing month, on one occasion taking part in the *Creation*, and on the other singing two pieces each from the operas in which she has achieved her highest fame—*Hamlet* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*. A paragraph in a musical contemporary states that an enterprising *impressario* (we believe that is the correct phrase) has engaged Mdlle. Nilsson to give a series of concerts extending over three months, for which she is to receive over eight thousand pounds, a rate of payment that may perhaps account for the high prices of admission to the Free Trade Hall on the occasion of her appearance here. The fact, too, if fact it be, is quite in keeping with that chapter of romance—the history of her career. Born in Sweden, in 1843, the daughter of a labourer at an iron-forge, Christine Nilsson displayed her passion for music at a very early age, by learning without the aid of masters to play on the violin and flute. For three or four years she frequented fairs, and other popular places of resort, singing, and accompanying herself on the violin; and it was at one of these rural festivals that she was heard by a gentleman who, struck by her genius, undertook the charge of her musical and general education. She made her *debut* at Stockholm, in 1860, and in Paris at the close of the same year. Each subsequent season has added to her fame. An accomplished critic, in a notice of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, quotes for a purpose Sir Walter Scott's own description of the heroine. "Lucy Ashton's exquisitely beautiful yet somewhat girlish features were formed to express peace of mind, serenity, and indifference to the tinsel of worldly pleasure. Her locks, which were of shadowy gold, divided on a brow of exquisite whiteness, like a gleam of broken and pallid sunshine upon a hill of snow. The expression of the countenance was in the last degree gentle, soft, timid, and feminine." This, adds the critic, is a very exact description of the personal appearance of Mdlle. Nilsson.

SALFORD WATERWORKS.

Again our friend who writes to the papers deserves a passing tribute. This time he proposes, in the columns of the *Examiner*, an amalgamation of the waterworks of Manchester with those of Salford. It is really unconscionable to ask further services from a gentleman who has done the community so important a one as making this suggestion; but it will be necessary, in order to carry out his excellent idea, that he should inform the Salford corporation where their waterworks are situated. It will also be needful that he should surrender up to them, in order to effect his proposition, his own lively imagination, in which fertile region alone has that establishment any existence. We presume, the reasoning of this writer to the papers was as follows: Add 0 waterworks to 1, and you get 10—which would be a profitable transaction. "A Well-wisher" is what Autolycus calls trust—"a very simple gentleman."

THOSE FLIXTON OMNIBUSES.

At length poetical retribution has overtaken the proprietors and passengers of these vehicles. A wheel has come off one and spilt its occupants, and rumour says another has been lately in like plight. Those who have noticed the inhuman, perilous, and thoroughly disgraceful way in which the drivers race the horses on this route—where all the policemen have ocular diseases—infirmity inducible by impaction

of silver on the palm of the hand—must often have expected some such natural consequence as is termed accident. We are not altogether sorry one has occurred. The passengers deserve a spill for suffering such cruelty, and will get off with a good fright and a merited shaking. As for the proprietors, in these days of nervous derangements, invisible injuries, and pitiless juries, there is no knowing where their liability will end.

"CATALOGUE, PRICE SIXPENCE."

It is the unpleasant tendency of all "exhibitions of modern works of art" to degenerate into portrait painters' show-rooms. In accordance with this custom, the exhibition which has just opened at the Royal Institution contains the usually oppressive number of pictures of somebodies who are nobodies. At least, most of them are nobodies, if one may judge by their physiognomies. That one cannot judge by their names, is what we write to complain of. If the spectator is to be bored with a multitude of ugly portraits, it is only fair that he should be informed who the plain people are to whom he owes his suffering. It is vexatious, after one has paid one's sixpence for a catalogue, and taken the trouble to refer to it, to find the word "Portrait" is the sole reward for all one's capital and labour. It won't do to plead the modesty of the originals as an excuse for the anonymous. You don't tell us the people are bashful who thus inflict their ugliness upon the community. We maintain that the spectator has a right to know who these exceedingly plain persons are.

MR. PENDER'S COMMUNICATION

TO HIS MANCHESTER FRIENDS.

SIR Alexander Cockburn is so popular a judge and so accomplished a man that we were all sorry to hear that there was a chance of his retirement. The older hands at newspaper gossip knew that at this time of the year rumours of the sort invariably crop up, and consequently they attached little importance to the announcement which, in a few days, would have been forgotten. But the eye of a great capitalist was fixed upon that announcement, and even from that simple paragraph more capital was believed to be squeezable. Mr. Pender, formerly a member of parliament, and even yet we believe a member of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, beheld that paragraph about the retirement of Sir Alexander, and forthwith felt great concern lest Manchester should believe it. The change on the judicial bench would have made such havoc with 40's mule and 8¼ lb. Calvert's cloth, that Mr. Pender felt it necessary that Manchester should be set right, and that Manchester should also know that the learned Chief of "the Bench" was staying with Mr. Pender, and also that Lord and Lady Wilton, together with other distinguished guests, were enjoying the unostentatious hospitality of our worthy fellow-citizen, at his shooting, hunting, fishing, and stagging retreat, in Argyleshire.

In its issue of Tuesday, our contemporary the *Courier* had the following paragraph:—

LORD CHIEF JUSTICE COCKBURN.

With respect to the rumoured resignation of Lord Chief Justice Cockburn, the private secretary of Mr. John Pender, of this city, dating from Minard Castle, Argyleshire, on Saturday, writes:—

Mr. Pender has noticed a good many paragraphs in the papers lately, speaking of the probability of Lord Chief Justice Cockburn resigning on account of bad health. Mr. Pender thinks it may be news to the Manchester papers if you were to communicate the following to them. His lordship is at present on a visit to Mr. Pender, having arrived a few days ago in his yacht the Zouave. Since his arrival his lordship has been amusing himself in yachting, shooting, fishing, driving, &c., and altogether appears to be in capital health. He seems to laugh at the idea of resigning, of which he has no intention at present. Lord and Lady Wilton and other distinguished visitors have also been staying with Mr. Pender.

In the present unsettled condition of our staple industry the foregoing announcement could not but have a soothing influence upon our spirits. It is pleasant to think that though Mr. Pender himself is a chasing of the deer—no doubt only partially attired about the limbs—yet that his private secretary, lucky man, is kept on tap, so to speak, and is ready at any moment to run off clear a paragraph in continuation of the wonderful diary of Jeames, for the special satisfaction of the folks in populous city pent. But after all are we quite sure that the paragraph has been written by the private secretary? To us it reads as if a greater than the private secretary had done it. The handwriting may be that of the secretary, but there is only one man in this neighbourhood who could have conceived the ideas. No private secretary in the world in the receipt of a moderate salary could have deliberately written himself or his employer down a snob unless he had been directed to do so. The announcement reads as if it were full of false pleas. In the first place we were not over anxious in Manchester about this rumoured retirement, and Mr. Pender knew we were not; but the plea was obliged in decency to be used as an excuse for trumpeting to the cloth commission agents that the Chief Justice of England was visiting Minard Castle. Still the pretentious orbit is not complete, for had the health of the learned judge not been in question, Mr. Pender could not have dragged in the names of "Lord and Lady Wilton and other distinguished visitors," as of course his private secretary would have resigned his situation sooner than have wallowed in the mire of the court newsman. Oh! harp of the North, that mouldering long hath hung by the wild elm that guards St. Fillan's spring, be these the ancient sons of Caledon whose feats thy members were wont to celebrate? Wallace and Bruce, and Burns and Cumming, arrest the ruin of your recreant son; or if you decline to touch him, fetch the Chelsea philosopher, with his old tickle-toby from Ecclefechan, and let him teach maun Johnnie to lead a manly life.

THE GREAT FAST

OF THE JEWS IN MANCHESTER.

And ye shall have, on the tenth day of this seventh month, a holy convocation; and ye shall afflict your souls: ye shall not do any work therein.

NUMBERS xxix., 7.

THIS is the Jews' warrant for observing the fifteenth of September as a day of solemn prayer and fasting. On Wednesday last, "the tenth day of the seventh month," according to their reckoning, we were witness to their literal fulfilment of the above portion of the Sinaitic law. It is true they made no attempt, so far as we could see, to fulfil, either literally or symbolically, the directions which follow—directions for the sacrifice of various animals—but if the "holy convocation," the afflicting of the soul, and the abstinence from work are not fully carried out by a whole day's incessant worship and fasting, then is obedience to the above verse an utter impossibility. Fasting, in this instance, is no case of fish and soup-mâigre; it is really and truly "eat no bread and drink no water." Man, woman, and child fast rigidly from sunset on Tuesday till the stars come out on Wednesday night. Very young children, we presume, are exceptions, but close to us on Wednesday last there sat several little girls of, say ten or twelve years of age, who had, even then, been entirely without food for sixteen hours, and who had still some six or seven hours of foodless service to undergo. "Ye shall afflict your souls;" the Jews of the present day would seem to add, "and your bodies also."

The synagogue was oppressively hot—no wonder, considering the number of human beings who had been breathing in it for so many hours, and the number of gas jets which were kept burning. Now and again, a worshipper would leave his or her place, and go out, we presume, into the fresh air for a few minutes, but such indulgence was comparatively rare, and, in the case of the ladies, surprisingly so. We only witnessed one instance of actual fainting, but we must confess to a continual and unpleasant state of nervous apprehension, as we glanced along the rows of pale faces in the ladies' gallery. Let the Christian worshipper, who grumbles at a service of two hours in church, between a good breakfast and a better dinner, imagine himself, his wife, his sons and daughters, sitting out a service which took up 126 closely printed pages—a whole Prayer-book in itself. This service, or rather succession of services, was almost entirely in Hebrew, but the English translation, printed on every alternate page, occupied 126 such alternate pages; and, besides, there were two, if not more, sermons, the one we heard lasting upwards of forty minutes. The Prayer-book itself was

somewhat bewildering to a Gentile stranger like ourself, if for nothing else because it began at the *end*, its title being printed on what, among Christians, would be called the last page. This, of course, is on account of the Hebrew, which is printed and read from right to left. When we found that the book we held in our hands was only the fourth volume of the *Forms of Prayer used by the West London Synagogue of the British Jews*, we began involuntary to wonder how long it takes a British Jew of ordinary capacity to become acquainted with so copious a liturgy. At the same time let us add, that all the prayers we read in this fourth volume are very beautiful, and such as, save and except for the absence of any reference to the second person of the Trinity, might well be used by any Christian. No compliment, perhaps, this in the eyes of our Jewish friends; but we speak according to the best of our knowledge and belief.

These British Jews, in whose synagogue we were sitting, are an offshoot from the main Jewish body. They are otherwise called the Reformed Jews, and profess to have made several great improvements on the practice and ritual of their brethren. It is no business of ours to offer any opinion on these points. Suffice it, that one great and important reform is the introduction of instrumental music and trained choirs in the service of the synagogue. The "kist full of whistles," as the old Scotch divine called it, has made a great gulf between Jew and Jew. There exist, so we were told, but two organs in all the English synagogues, just as there exist but two congregations of British, or Reformed, Jews in our island, one in West London, the other in Cheetham Hill Road; but these two congregations comprise some of the wealthiest and most influential Jews in London and Manchester. Judging from what we saw on Wednesday, we can quite believe this latter statement. The Manchester branch of the Reformed Jews have worshipped in their present temple about ten years, and, thanks to the ability and care of their organist and choir-leader, Mr. Goodwin, they are renowned, alike amongst Jew and Gentile, for the excellence of their music. The service on Wednesday was the *crême de la crême* of musical perfection. We had been led to expect a treat, and we certainly had one.

As to the synagogue itself, it consists of a nave and small apsidal chancel, and may hold perhaps six hundred people. There is a gallery round three sides of the nave, appropriated, as in other synagogues, to the women; but, unlike all other synagogues except the one above mentioned in London, the ladies are not concealed behind any curtain or grating, but possess a gallery precisely similar to that of any Christian church or chapel. Downstairs sit the gentlemen, with their hats on—a striking novelty to a Gentile visitor. Whether it be a usual custom or not we cannot say, but on Wednesday last they wore, each one, a scarf across their shoulders, with long fringed ends coming down in front. Some of these scarves were worn like shawls, covering the neck and a great part of the back, others were rolled up in narrow compass. Some were pure white, others had a gold border. The ladies had no distinctive badge, except, in nearly every case, a very rich and fashionable costume. We only noticed one poor person in the whole of the ladies' gallery. In fact, we understand that the amount of wealth represented by the congregation of this synagogue is something enormous, even for wealthy Manchester.

Just in front of the chancel, on a slightly raised platform and facing the male seats, is a reading desk, capable of holding two or three persons. Behind this, to the left, is a pulpit; on the right, a candlestick after the model of the golden candlestick in the Tabernacle of old, though the latter had only three branches on each side of it, while this one has four—nine lights in all. It was not used on Wednesday. At equal distances from pulpit and candlestick are two standards, of five lights each, and these were kept burning during the whole service. From the top of the chancel arch is suspended a silver lamp, which, we were told, is kept burning, day and night, throughout the year. It is precisely similar to the altar lamp in a Roman Catholic chapel. Again we beg pardon for the simile, but it best explains our meaning.

The chancel or apse is lighted by three stained glass windows. The centre one of these is partially blocked up by a lofty erection—we scarcely know how to describe it. Were it anywhere else, or used for any other purpose, we should call it a cupboard. A silk curtain hangs before it; and it stands on a platform, several feet above the chancel floor, with a rail in front, and steps at each end. This cupboard or recess, is the "Holy Place" of the synagogue, and is called the Ark. Behind the curtain are deposited several rolls of parchment, profusely decorated, whereon are written the Books of Moses. These are taken out with much ceremony, at certain intervals in the service; a passage is read, and they are then returned to their place, and covered up again; the Ark, and its contents, being always approached with the greatest reverence. When we add that the arches, pillars, and decorations of the synagogue are of a Saracenic or Moorish character, somewhat resembling the Spanish Alhambra, we have done with topographical description.

We entered the synagogue about mid-day. The Rabbi, or minister, Dr. Gotthiel, a stout gentleman in black gown, broad white scarf, white bands, and black viretta, or four-cornered cap, sat in the reading desk, together with a pale-faced, short-bearded gentleman, in scarf and skullcap, who, it appeared, is a sort of curate. On either side of these two, was a gentleman, also bescarved, holding one of the rolls of the Law, in its crimson and gold cover. After a short time these sacred rolls were taken back to the Ark, and their bearers, who, we fancy, correspond to our churchwardens, retired to seats at the side of the chancel. Then followed a sermon, by Professor Theodores, of Owens College. After this, the "Additional Service for the Day of Atonement," occupying 28 pages of the Prayer-book, and about two hours in actual time. Some few of the prayers were said aloud or silently by the Rabbi or his curate: others were chanted by the choir; others again were partly said by the minister, and partly sung. There was a great deal of music and chanting. Some of the tunes are said to be three or four thousand years old. Some are modern; and one or two the composition of Mr. Goodwin. Then followed the benediction, pronounced in English, by Dr. Gotthiel, with arms outspread, while all the congregation stood in solemn reverence. By the way, we noticed that no one ever knelt. Sitting or standing were the only two postures.

And now came the most beautiful service of all—the Commemoration Service for the Dead. We shall never forget it. The mournful pathos of the music, the exquisite loveliness of the anthem and hymn, the complete recognition of our own Christian doctrine of the communion of saints—the "sure and certain hope" expressed of meeting our dear ones again in a better world—were indescribably touching and beautiful. We close our notice with two extracts from this most interesting service, the first a prayer, said silently by every member of the congregation, amidst a stillness which might be felt; the second, part of a hymn—would that we could give the music for it also:

I remember you, all my dear relatives and friends, who have preceded me on the path to life eternal. The memory of your affection is indelibly engraven on the

tablets of my heart. My soul clings to you this day as it did while yet we were fellow-sojourners in this land of the living, and the sweetest comfort that I feel springs from the celestial hope that we shall, some day, be re-united in the world of eternity.—Amen.

Soul, why art thou troubled so?
Why art thou so sore afraid?
Feel'st thou not the Father nigh,
Him whose heart contains us all?
Lives no God for thee on high,
Loving while His judgments fall
Look above,
God is love.
Soul, why art thou troubled so?
Heart and eye
Lift on high,
Every tear on earth that flows,
God, the world's great ruler knows.

Soul, why art thou troubled so?
Why art thou so sore afraid?
From thy heart has fatal death
Torn the loved ones thou would'st save?
Saw'st thou them with anguished breath,
Sink into the gloomy grave?
Death's last blow
Endeth woe.
Soul have comfort in the Lord!
Tears take flight!
For in light
Walk the hosts that God adore;
Blessëd, blessëd evermore.

LIFE IN BLACKPOOL.

[SECOND PAPER.]

WE propose to devote this paper for the most part to a description of the sea-side life of resident visitors at Blackpool; that is, of those who come to the station in cabs, well laden with portmanteaus and trunks; who bring changes of raiment without number, and settle down for some weeks' stay. The everyday existence of such people is singularly unexciting. It appears, too, to admit of little or no variation. Every visitor does exactly the same sort of thing at exactly the same time as every other visitor. A correct chronicle of the doings and sayings of any one resident describes with sufficient accuracy the sayings and doings of nine-tenths of the others. On a little reflection, the amount of time given up to eating, drinking, and sleeping appears quite marvellous. All these operations are, of course, gone through at home, but at Blackpool they are indulged in with a frequency, perseverance, and enthusiastic heartiness, which either demonstrates the absence of more intellectual occupations, or speaks volumes for the appetizing influences of the place. In fact, eating and sleeping are the salient points of the twenty-four hours' occupation. The intervals are only, so to speak, accidental, to be filled up anyhow.

Take, for example, the case of the residents at any of the hotels. With slight changes in the hours the description applicable to one will be true of all. The bell summoning to the public breakfast of the place, in which most of the visitors share, rings, we will say, at half-past eight. Public-spirited ladies may choose to preside, or, in the absence of volunteers, it appears to be the rule that the lady who has been longest in the house shall take one, and the latest comer the other end of the table. Breakfast, with the assistance of late risers, occupies the greater part of an hour. After a short rest in the drawing-room, and a discussion of plans, if there are any happy enough to have volitions of any sort, they separate, and each little section of the party finds amusement for itself. In some extraordinary cases it happens that there is present some one at once public-spirited and gifted with great powers of organization. Under this person's leadership—and to one blessed with sufficient confidence the duty of leading is not a difficult one, for the rank and file of the party, in the utter absence of pre-arranged scheme of any sort, willingly fall in with anything that is suggested—it may be that a drive, pic-nic fashion, is arranged. Possibly a trip by water is preferred. In which latter case it is not altogether improbable that, instead of being on their return landed, as they expected, at Blackpool, the travellers may find themselves driven by stress of weather to Southport, Fleetwood, or Liverpool, and left to find their way home again as best they can. If this happens, there is sure to appear in an early *Visitor* a graphic account of the adventure. This must have been written either by the captain of the steamer or by some gifted literary friend, for it glows with admiration of the combined bravery, presence of mind, and consummate seamanship of the commander and the crew, and of the splendid sea-going qualities of the boat. But such comparatively long journies take the visitors for the greater part of the day out of the sphere of our description. Besides, such genial combinations are the exception. The general rule is that each should occupy himself with his own concerns. Some few bathe; but mostly the hour or two following breakfast is passed in a sort of aimless strolling. Those who live in private houses have marketing to attend to. They bustle about the shops and markets in the flurry of "buying in" supplies, and are quite persuaded that they are spending anything but an idle time. Hotel residents have, unfortunately, no particular purchasing to do. Still there is nothing to prevent their walking about the markets, critically surveying the edibles on sale. So the time passes till the hour set apart for luncheon. It is considered everybody's bounden duty to do his or her best in the way of eating it, seeing that such a meal is provided. The interval before dinner may be spent in strolling on the Promenade, visiting the circulating library, walking amongst the stones and sands, and other purposeless wanderings. Though not particularly exciting, these occupations have a wonderful power for developing hunger.

In the greater number of hotels half-past one or two o'clock is the dinner hour. Some of the more aristocratic places pretend to a six o'clock dinner and full-dress. As before, the oldest resident visitor takes the head of the table, is addressed as Mr. President, and claims great respect in consequence. He settles any point of order that may arise, and is deep in the confidence of the waiter. At the other end is the latest comer, as vice-president. After dinner a sleep is often found to be not inconvenient. Reading and such occupations as require little active exertion are very popular. Residence at the sea side develops in a wonderful manner the desire of being photographed, and this is the time of day usually chosen for that task. We may have been unlucky, but we have never yet seen a carte taken at Blackpool or similar places which the victim has been willing to exhibit without explanation and apology. Much of the work is so bad that no unhappy amateur would acknowledge it as his handiwork. Tea follows very rapidly. This is luckily a light repast, consisting chiefly of tea and shrimps. After that comes a series of walks along the Pier, which is continued till the darkness or lateness of the hour drives the promenaders within. This is the only time of the day when there is a certainty of seeing every person worth seeing in the place.

The early approach of darkness at this season necessarily makes the evening within doors a long one. The drawing-room of the hotel is now popular. Whist and bagatelle are introduced. Occasionally the company includes clever and obliging musicians, who are willing to do their best to please. If our organizing friend be present, he is sure either to set going games in which everybody must take a part, or to arrange a dance, to the great delight of the young ladies. If pianoforte is unavailable or deemed inadequate, the services of some itinerant musicians are secured. The great fault of these impromptu carpet dances is, as a rule, the absence of a proper supply of male dancers fit to act as partners. There are outside amusements also. Occasionally a circus rears its head. At intervals, such clever people as Mr. and Mrs. Howard Paul pay Blackpool a visit. The drama at times struggles into existence. Actors and actresses, in the absence of more remunerative or more pleasant engagements, are nothing loth to visit the sea side. Thus it sometimes happens that extraordinary attractions are present on the stage, seldom, however, meeting with due appreciation. We have seen at the old theatre, now converted into public baths, Miss Nelly and Miss Louisa Moore, then in the full glory of girlish beauty and loveliness, supported by Mr. Everill acting in his best form, play to a hundred spectators! What would not some of us give for such a sight now? "England's Eminent Tragedian," Mr. J. Pitney Weston, is but a sorry substitute, even in his great character of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, and assisted by some of the least attractive of the members of the stock company of the old Queen's Theatre in Manchester. We are almost ashamed to have to write that, somewhere in the course of the evening's pleasures, a heavy and prodigiously substantial supper for a while distracts everybody's attention.

Such is the everyday life of residents at Blackpool Hotels. After one is reduced to the lotus eater's state of mind necessary to the full and perfect enjoyment of such a state of existence, it is by no means wanting in a sort of pleasure. It realizes to perfection the *dolce far niente* feeling. There are shadows, however, even in this bright noon-day of idleness. It is impossible altogether to avoid disagreeable people, and unpleasant folk can easily raise themselves into prominence in such a social state. We have met, under these circumstances, ladies who, for mischief-making capacity and power of ill-natured gossip, surpassed every previous effort of our imagination. Such people are, however, only to be met with exceptionally; and on the other hand many pleasant acquaintances and some true and lasting friendships have been so formed.

So far we have been speaking of the everyday life of Blackpool. Two days in the week are, however, not to be considered as included. Saturday and Sunday are, for several reasons, special days. There is something unusual both in the character of the visitors and in the habits of the days. At ordinary times ladies form the majority of residents. On Saturday, chiefly by means of the Blackpool Express, there comes a mighty rush of visitors of the other sex. This change we may perhaps be allowed to say is the cause of much pleasant expectation. Saturday night is that occasion in the week when there is most chance of a successful, because evenly-balanced, dance. Sunday is, in the first place, distinguished by an attention even greater than ordinary (difficult and somewhat painful as it is to realize) being given to eating. Breakfast is arranged half an hour later than usual. Some people only attend to public devotions when at home. Large numbers are, however, careful to take part in at least one service, either at church or chapel. It is probable that the place of worship will be crowded, visitors forming the greater part of the congregation. A collection is inevitable, and charity ought not to be checked on reflecting on what must be the paucity of the worshippers and the poverty of the place during seven or eight months of the year. After service, the proper thing is to go immediately to the Pier. This, and the one later in the day, are the fashionable promenades of the week, and to miss them is to fail in seeing one of the most wonderful sights of which Blackpool can at any time boast. After talking over the sermon, or other pursuits of the morning, much gossip is of course indulged in, though it is not of the most unadulteratedly ill-natured kind. Everybody who has claims to distinction or notoriety has those claims scrutinized. The elaborate dandy, who is known to be a warehouse youth, living on an infinitesimal salary; the gigantic lady who is supposed to keep a refreshment bar in some low part of Manchester; the swell attired after the pattern of the stage Mephistopheles; the couples who are making love really, and those who are only making believe; the lady with the green dress and blue gloves—these are all held up as objects of scorn or admiration. The dinner of Sunday gives indisputable evidence of increased elaborateness; over dessert and wine an unconscionable long time is spent, with the necessary result of intolerable sleepiness and heaviness. Light tea, evening promenade, sacred music in the drawing room, and heavy supper, fill up the time till the early hour which is established as the Sunday bed-time.

In our previous paper we referred briefly to the pursuits of those younger men who make their visit an excuse for dissipation pure and simple. The time left after dinner on Saturday is by them devoted to wandering from one hotel to the other; changing from the bar-room of this to the billiard-room of that. On Sunday morning they make a point of drinking copious draughts of bitter beer before breakfast. The social and other peculiarities of every hotel are well known to them. The Imperial is a little out of the way, and but for its good billiard-room would not be so much patronized. Nor is the old-fashioned stateliness of Bailey's in their style. The Clifton Arms is very popular. There, under the shallowest pretence of being travellers, they find themselves able at any time to procure beer. The Beach is regarded by this class as a late house. They will have none of the Royal, which gives no encouragement to drinking, and which will be long in losing the air of stiff respectability cultivated by its late proprietress. A drive to the Foxhall is considered very amusing. With all this there is not a single pursuit indulged in but what might be enjoyed at least as well, and often to greater perfection, in the smoky city which has for a time been left behind.

INCANTATION SCENE

ON THE IRWELL.

A SECOND Shakesperian extravaganza was performed last week by the celebrated company from the Theatre Royal, Town Hall, Salford.

SCENE—SUSPENSION BRIDGE.

Time, midnight. Tollgates closed. Thunder. Cauldrons of boiling gas tar, with tanks of ammonia water. The river beneath, with clouds of incense rising. Three councillors approach, disguised as witches. fly over the gates on their broomsticks, unobserved by Lord Fitz-Darby, the pike-keeper.

FIRST WITCH.—Thrice the Bridge Inn Cat hath mewed.
SECOND WITCH.—While with the Griffins we have bowled.
THIRD WITCH.—Harper cries "'Tis time, 'tis time."
FIRST WITCH.—And Lord Fitz-Darby we have sold.
SECOND WITCH.— Round about the cauldron go,
In the ammonia water throw,
Smelling gas, and inky pitch,
Churn them up in the filthy ditch.
ALL.—Puddle, puddle, death-rate double,
Fitz-Darby's fads, and turnpike trouble.
FIRST WITCH.—Carcases of drownèd dogs,
Loathsome toads, and spawn of frogs,
Strangled cats, and Chadwick's smoke,
Fumes from copper works and coke,
Refuse of a former flood,
Sulphur, chemicals, and mud,
Kneaded into fever cake,
In the cauldron boil and bake!
ALL.—Puddle, puddle, death-rate double,
Fitz-Darby's fads, and Higson's bubble.
THIRD WITCH.—Suds of soap, and slime of snigs,
Contracts, dodges, thimble-rigs,
Poisonous venom from the slow
Worm of Harriet Beecher Stowe;
Cesspool, sewage, in the ditch,
Makes the gruel thick and rich;
Drop your H's while you may,
And clap the h'aspirate on h'A.
FIRST WITCH.—By the pricking of my thumbs
Something heavy this way comes.

Enter Macbirr.

MACBIRR.—How now, you secret, black, and midnight wags,
What is't you do?
WITCHES *(aside)*—What's his little game?
FIRST WITCH.—All hail to thee, Macbirr, Thane Soft Sawdor!
SECOND WITCH.—All hail to thee, Macbirr, Thane of Glamour!
THIRD WITCH.—All hail to thee, Macbirr, who would'st be Mayor hereafter!
MACBIRR.—I charge you, by that which you possess,
(Howe'er you come to have it) answer me,
Though you withstand the floods, and let men fight
'Gainst Charley and the churches, tho' the yeasty water
Confound and swallow your ratepayers up,
Though Higson's corn be lodged, &c.
ALL.—Come high or low,
Thyself and office deftly show!

Thunder (and Turf) apparition of Fits-Darby appears.

MACBIRR.—Tell me, thou unknown power!
FIRST WITCH.—He knows thy thought,
Hear his speech, but say thou nought.
APPARITION.—The divvil! Tuppence! Macbirr, Macbirr, Macbirr,
Beware the Thane of Strife! Beware, Mac Duffer!

Tremendous explosion. Witches vanish. Apparition blown up.

MACBIRR *(solus)*.—Methinks it now begins to drizzle,
Perhaps to bed I'd better mizzle.

(Hooknit.)

G. TWIGG'S Patent Corkscrews. The most powerful ever invented, and being provided with a patent India-rubber pad, which forms an elastic cushion for the neck, they are warranted not to break the bottle.
Manufactory: 30, Mosley Road, Birmingham.—Sold by all Ironmongers.

WESLEYANS AND THE LITURGY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SPHINX.

SIR,—The letter of a "Wesleyan Methodist," in your last issue, being calculated to somewhat mislead those of your readers who take an interest in the question touched upon, I take the liberty of proffering another version. It is true that the liturgy of the Church of England is, and has been, used in some of the leading Wesleyan chapels for many years; but as its adoption is decided upon by a few influential gentlemen in committee, and *not* by the congregation at all, I don't see how it can be said that it is "where the intelligence and education of the people have been favorable to its admission." It is, however, *not* correct that the liturgy is *regularly* used even by the leading congregations; it is used in the morning only, and then not in its complete form, but very much curtailed; and even then not regularly, as in the case quoted by a "Wesleyan Methodist," viz.: Radnor-street, where that large portion of it, the litany, is rarely read; why I cannot explain, except it is because the intelligence and education of the people are favourable to its dismission.

There is one notable instance of a Wesleyan chapel, not a hundred miles from Rusholme, where the admission, morning and evening, of the full liturgical service has proved a miserable failure. I am not sufficiently well acquainted with the congregation worshipping there to say whether that result is owing to their want of "education and intelligence," but am not so sure such was not the case with the chosen few who were the cause of its adoption at the time the chapel was built. Suffice it to say the result is a miserable failure.

On the other hand, I would refer a "Wesleyan Methodist" to the success which has attended the Independent chapel in Chorlton Road, and where the form of service is simpler than that intended to be used at the new Whalley Range Chapel. Far from considering it a test of "education and intelligence" to be able to appreciate a service elaborated by ritual, and other innovations, which appeal purely to the senses and not to the "intelligence and education," I think it a more certain test of intelligence to be able to enjoy a service unembellished with those aids to attractiveness, now becoming so popular, and to enjoy a good sermon such as is never heard from a ritualistic pulpit, but which still proceeds from methodist pulpits, and many such from our Radnor-street pulpit, from week to week, at the present time.

From the ill-concealed disappointment of a "Wesleyan Methodist," at the arrangements for the service at the new chapel, I conclude that he is an intending worshipper there, and probably well acquainted with the other intending worshippers; if so, let him test their feelings on the subject, and I have little doubt, were it proved that the majority are in favour of the full liturgy, the committee would concede the point. I may, however, add that there are other qualifications necessary to the full enjoyment of a service, plain but intellectual, not required I confess to appreciate a service similarly conducted to that at the church he has recently visited, but the possession of which would enable a "Wesleyan Methodist" to enjoy the plainest service, and the most comon-place sermon, more than it is possible for him now to enjoy any service, no matter how beautiful the form or splendid the accompanying display, which qualifications are humbly recommended to a "Wesleyan Methodist" by

ANOTHER WESLEYAN.

Moss-Side, Manchester,
Sept. 13th, 1869.

BYRON AND MRS. STOWE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SPHINX.

SIR,—Your singularly able article on the Byron controversy has recalled to my mind the verses launched by Tennyson, many years ago, against some literary busy-body who had done his little best, upon grounds quite as inadequate as Mrs. Stowe's, to defame the memory of a great poet. The lines would have formed a fitting prelude to your remarks:—

For now the poet cannot die
Nor leave his music as of old,
But round him ere he scarce be cold
Begins the scandal and the cry.

Proclaim the faults he would not show:
Break lock and seal: betray the trust:
Keep nothing sacred: 'tis but just
The many-headed beast should know.

Yours faithfully,

A.L.B.

[FROM THE NEW YORK REVIEW.]

In the *Atlantic Monthly*, for September, appears an article the impudent audacity of which is, we believe, absolutely unparalleled. It proceeds from the pen of Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, the authoress of the novel of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. It concerns itself with the domestic afflictions of the poet Byron. It states in a fervid manner, and with an earnestness which expresses on the part of the writer, conviction that what it states is true—that Byron was guilty of a crime which is almost nameless among men, and which we shudder to mention even at second hand—the crime of incest. This, it says, was the cause of Byron's separation from his wife—that deplorable domestic catastrophe which has borne the upas fruit of an evergreen scandal. It makes these statements upon the authority of Lady Byron, who is dead. It does not offer one jot or tittle of evidence that they are true One woman, who does not even pretend that she has investigated the matter, tells the story which was told to her by another woman, who is beyond the reach of appeal. All the world knew that Byron was married, and that after a little more than one year of married life, his wife left him, never to meet him again on earth. All the world knew that the cause of their separation was a secret, and was kept so—as it ought to have been. But—so great is the influence which that stupendous genius has exerted upon the world—society has never been content to let this trivial subject alone. There was some reason why Lord and Lady Byron parted as man and wife:—what was it? That has been the mental attitude of thousands of curious readers of Byron's poetry. Nearly fifty years has passed since he was laid in the grave. The wife, who long survived him, is also under the sod. And now, after all this time, comes the foulest charge against his nature and his conduct which human ingenuity could devise or human malice could propagate. It is made, too, upon the flimsiest of all pretexts. A poor, addle-pated woman, in Italy, who was once Byron's mistress, has put forth a stupid book, which nobody could read, and which was fast drifting to the limbo of all waste paper, in which Byron's domestic affairs were made the subject of some twaddling comment. And this book, it appears, required answer—this pitiful farrago of inconsequential gossip demanded that Byron should be dragged out of his grave and trampled into the mire of public ignominy. The work of the vampire has been done, and, we blush to say it—has been done by an American. Not one jot of evidence has been adduced, to prove that the terrible assertion is true. Lady Byron thought it was true, and expressed herself to that effect to Mrs. Harriet Stowe. That is the sum and substance of the matter. Lady Byron was an old woman at the time, was broken in health, was in a morbid condition, and, from all we have heard, was that worst of all moral lunatics, a religious bigot. Her story defies all the laws of probability.

CROQUET.

ALTHOUGH there are great differences between them, there are likewise similarities numerous enough to entitle croquet to be classed with billiards somewhere in the category of scientific games. But if croquet, as scientifically played, is in some respects inferior to its cognate, billiards—as it certainly is—it has also its points of special and exceptional interest. These are not so apparent when two or even four players are engaged. But with six or eight players croquet, to play it as it is capable of being and should be played, requires a very long head indeed. The idiosyncrasies of each player ought to be allowed for, the nature and state of the ground taken into consideration, and the order in which every ball will come into play carefully remembered under pain of making irretrievable mistakes. The rear of the army should be kept from straggling, its van from being too impetuous, and fresh combinations should be formed on the spur of the moment at each critical point of the game. Croquet played in this way, to compare small things with great, is as different to croquet played lackadaisically or perfunctorily as the strategy and tactics of the Prussian army in 1866 were to the inroad of some blundering barbarous invader of yore. The chief of a side in the game of croquet who makes but few mistakes in his mimic campaign must possess some of the qualities that go to the making of a successful general—coolness, quickness, decision, memory, powers of combination, animating influence over others. Who amongst the multitude give the loitering idlers on many a luxurious lawn the credit of exercising any of these traits of character? Who supposes that a possible Von Moltke is unconsciously exhibiting marked indications of strategical power and capacity for command in many a small knot of eager and excited croquet players? If there be anything in what we have advanced, there are evidently, at least, two sides to the croquet question. There is croquet as the unscientific pastime—the vehicle for mere fashionable idling, the means towards amatory trifling, the delight of childish sportfulness; and there is croquet as a highly scientific and absorbing game, ranking as a sort of outdoor compound of billiards and chess. The great objection to it—and it is one that will be very difficult to overcome in this country—is, that it is not what is called a "manly game." No muscular strength is required in its successful pursuit; no powers of physical endurance are necessary

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in any phase of the pastime. But then we cannot always, or all of us, be playing cricket, or "cracking on" in racing crafts, or rowing in outriggers, or hunting foxes or wild boars, or exhibiting athletic feats of strength and speed. Some outdoor game is required for persons not in chronic training. As an open air recreation that we can have at our very doors, and for any spare hours, when to go long distances or to give up whole days to pleasure are out of the question, is clearly a desideratum. Manly sports are, in fact, denied to all but the few; the professional man can seldom spare time even for croquet. Under this view, then, it may very fairly be urged by the lovers and promoters of the game that there is a distinct place for it in the outdoor national amusements of the country; and if so, evidently the more it is cultivated scientifically the greater progress will it make, and the greater hold will it take on society at large.

VEGETARIANS AND TEETOTALLERS.—It is reported in every direction that the Harvard crew trained on milk, vegetables, and fruit, and great surprise is expressed that they should have been so nearly successful. Their victory certainly would have been a triumph for the teetotallers and the vegetarians; but, after all, we see little ground for amazement. Half mankind swallows neither alcohol nor meat. A Turkish hamal would take an English porter and his load on his shoulders and walk away comfortably, and he never drinks anything stronger than coffee; while a Highland keeper, bred upon milk and oatmeal, will walk most other men down. Meat is good and alcohol is good, but there is little in meat that does not exist in milk, and alcohol is only good as a whip, enabling the taker to crowd twenty minutes' work into ten. We leave the *Lancet* to decide the point, but we see no real reason why a bread-eater should not do all the work of a flesh-eater, and suffer less. The real point is, with the vegetarian, as with the teetotaller, whether he gains enough to repay him for giving up a justifiable pleasure, in a world which has so few justifiable pleasures to offer.—*Spectator.*

SINGERS AND THEIR VOICES.—A Vienna paper gives an amusing account of the refreshments which the singers at the opera there are in the habit of taking between the acts to keep their voices in good order. Each singer, it appears, has his or her own peculiar specific. The Swedish tenor Labatt takes "two salted cucumbers for a dose, and declares that this vegetable is the best thing in the world for strengthening the voice and giving it "the true metallic ring." The other singers, however, do not seem to be of this opinion. Sontheim takes a pinch of snuff and drinks cold lemonade; Wachtel eats the yelk of an egg beaten up with sugar; Stegea, "the most corpulent of tenors," drinks "the brown juice of the gambrinus;" Walter, cold black coffee; Niemann, champagne; and Tichatchek, mulled claret. Ferenczy, the tenor, smokes one or two cigars; which his colleagues regard as so much poison, Mddle. Brann-Brini takes, after the first act, a glass of beer; after the third and fourth, a cup of café-au lait; and before the great duet in the fourth act of the "Huguenots" always a bottle of Moet Crêmont Rosé. Nauchbaur munches bonbons during the performance; Rubsam, the baritone, drinks mead; Mitterwurzer and Kindermann suck dry plums; Robinson, another baritone, drinks soda water; Formes takes porter, and Arabanek Gumpoldskirchner wine! The celebrated baritone, Beck, on the other hand, takes nothing at all, and refuses to speak. Draxler smokes Turkish tobacco and drinks a glass of beer. Another singer, Dr. Schmid, regulates his diet according to the state of his voice at the time. Sometimes he drinks coffee, sometimes tea, and a quarter of an hour afterwards lemonade, mead, or champagne, taking snuff between whiles, and eating apples, plums, and dry bread—a very liberal arrangement.

Bacchus seems to pay better than Mars, for within the last two years over twenty officers have retired from the army and entered the wine trade.

THE special commissioner of the *Times*, who is contributing to that paper a series of letters on the Irish Land Question, is Mr. O'Connor Morris, an Irish barrister, and an occasional leader-writer to the *Times*.

A HINT TO THEATRICAL MANAGERS.—The *Saturday Review*, in an article on current dramatic literature, remarks that women do not care to see burlesques, which may be one reason among many others for their manifest decline in popularity. "We should think," says the *Saturday*, that a burlesque must be as amusing to a party of ladies as the half-hour in a ball-room during which the gentlemen are taking supper below stairs. But, whether women in general are pleased or not with burlesque, it is undeniable that burlesque is not intended to please women. This article is manufactured for the consumption of men, and specially for that class of men who are called swells."

CRUELTY.—A passenger in a Rotterdam and London steamboat gives a most horrible account of the cruelty inflicted on the cattle imported,—partly from utter unconcern for their comfort, partly from a positive pleasure in their sufferings. The sheep were packed into one dense mass of flesh—as it were, a continuous life-solid,—without power to move, so that if one fell from exhaustion it was trampled under foot. The filth, of course, and smell were horrible; for the whole twenty-two hours they had no food or water, and the sailors, in passing them, had to leap down on to the backs of the sheep. Of course, the sailors kicked and danced upon them at pleasure, and one young ruffian was twice caught worrying the wretched, densely-packed creatures with a dog. Even when they got to London, we are told that they were not refreshed in any way by being turned out, but sent directly to the market, there to wait through the Sunday before they could be sold. The *Times* points out that the Contagious Diseases' (Cattle) Act of last session gives the Government ample power to insist on fit accommodation and good food for these unfortunate imports, and we hope the next captain who permits such a scandal will suffer heavily. It hardly involves, we suppose, so wicked a form of cruelty as the slave trade and its middle passage; yet there is something in deliberate cruelty to creatures that can't so much as mutiny, or even *hate* you for the misery you inflict, which seems even meaner and more despicable.

TO READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

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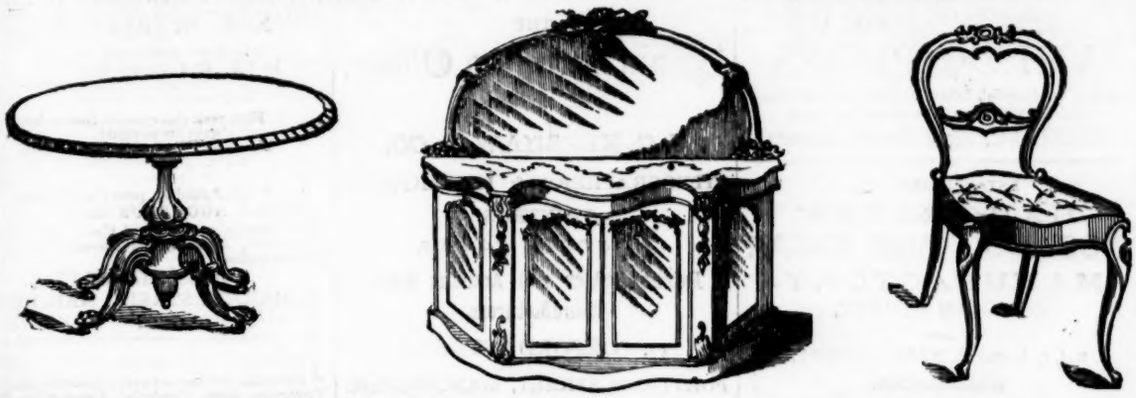

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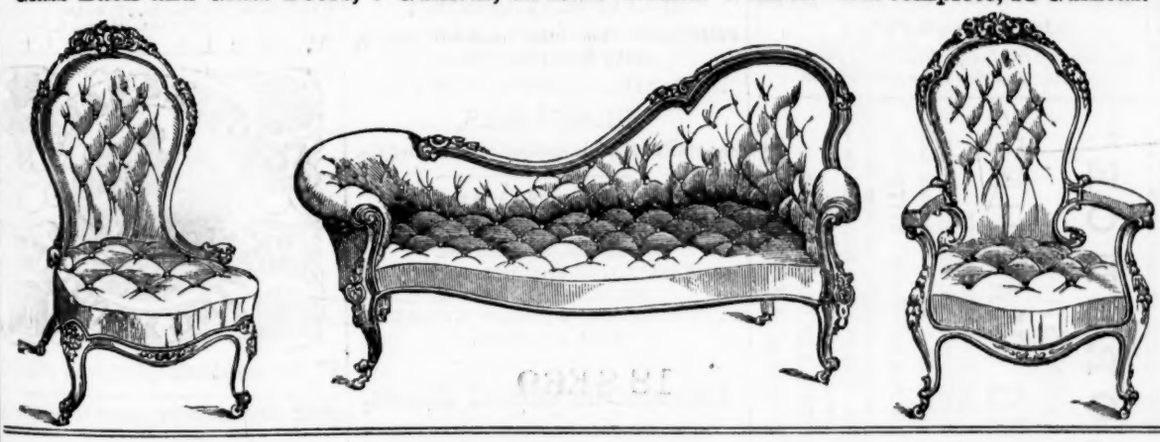

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